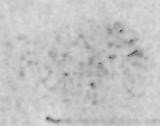

MR. ABBOT'S EULOGY ON



2



MASSACHUSETTS



AN
EULOGY
ON
THE ILLUSTRIOUS LIFE AND CHARACTER OF
GEORGE WASHINGTON;
DELIVERED BEFORE THE INHABITANTS
OF THE TOWN OF
HAVERHILL,
ON HIS BIRTH DAY, 1800,
AT THE REQUEST OF THEIR COMMITTEE.

BY ABIEL ABBOT.

AND
THE INVALUABLE LAST ADDRESS OF
President WASHINGTON
TO THE CITIZENS OF THE UNITED STATES,
THE LEGACY OF THE FATHER OF HIS COUNTRY.

“Discharge
“The gratitude and duty, which you owe him -
“By laying up his counsels in your hearts.”

HAVERHILL.
PRINTED BY ETH H. MOORE.

4444

EULOGY

OF

THE VIRTUES AND CHARACTER OF

GEORGE WASHINGTON

BY

WILLIAM

OF THE FIRST DAY

AT THE ANNUAL MEETING

OF THE

AND

THE NATIONAL ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY

IN THE CITY OF WASHINGTON

ON THE TWENTY-NINTH DAY OF JANUARY

THE LECTURE WAS DELIVERED BY

THE

THE NATIONAL ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY

WILLIAM

OF THE FIRST DAY

TO THE INHABITANTS OF THE TOWN OF HAVERHILL,
AT WHOSE REQUEST IT IS PUBLISHED,
THIS HUMBLE SKETCH
OF THE LIFE AND CHARACTER OF THE MAN,
WHOM HIS COUNTRY AND THE WORLD
HAVE DELIGHTED TO HONOR,
IS MOST RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED,
BY THIER OBEDIENT SERVANT AND
FELLOW CITIZEN,
THE AUTHOR.

HAVERHILL, FEBRUARY 22^d, 1800.

AT a legal town meeting held by adjournment—

Voted,—That the Selectmen be requested to procure printed as many copies of the Reverend ABIEL ABBOT's Eulogy, this day delivered, together with the INVALUABLE LAST ADDRESS OF PRESIDENT WASHINGTON, as they shall think proper; and that one copy at least be presented to each family.

True Copy of Record.

PHINEAS CARLETON, *Town Clerk.*



Eulogy.

THE brightest day in the calendar of this new world is come ; the day, which gave to America her political favor, the glory of arms, of councils, and of human nature. *Where is the timbrel, the pleasant harp, with the psaltery? Blow the trumpet ; beat the drum ; let the voice of joy and gratulation ring from Westmoreland to the utmost limits of our federate republic——Ah, silent is every voice, but that of grief ! The harp is turned into mourning ; the organ into the voice of them, that weep !* The flute warbles its complaint in solemn dirge ; the sprightly fife sinks its shrill martial note to funeral softness ; the animating drum muffles its tones to the sad concert ; and the mourning bell, with accent more deep and more mournful, announces the festive joys of this natal day gone forever !

FELLOW townsmen, we weep not alone. The millions of our nation are this day an assembly of
mourners

mourners. Hark, the voice of grief rises from the unambitious village ; it is echoed from the savage forest ; it swells even with deeper sighs from the Southern plantations of slavery. The villager, the savage, the slave, has lost his best friend. The sister States, like disconsolate orphans, lean on their urns of WASHINGTON, and thro the organ of their senates, mourn their departed father. The grand Councils of the nation turn the halls of state into chambers of mourning, and, with filial sensibility and official pomp, lament their guardian. The *living* father of our country mourns over the *dead*. His great soul, which sustains a nation's cares, now yields itself to tenderness, and receives condolence from weeping counsellors and legislators.

UNPRECEDENTED scene ! Throughout this great nation, all characters, private and official ; all ages, the blooming, the hoary, and the manly ; all parties, the patriotic and the selfish, unite to embalm with their tears the ashes of WASHINGTON. If aught in the power of mortals can relieve the gloom, which fills the venerable mansion at Mount Vernon ; if aught can soothe the afflicted, but magnanimous survivor of such an husband, it must be effected by these spontaneous testimonials of love and veneration.

THE day, selected by national authority to pay funeral honors to our national benefactor, suggests the

the best consolation, of which our minds are susceptible ; the contemplation of his birth, and illustrious life and character.

THE nativity* of this great man is an era in history. There is ever a predisposition of causes wisely arranged by Providence to produce any series of effects. Is a remnant of the degenerate human family to be secured from the overwhelming deluge ? The virtuous Noah is sent to build the ark. Is an oppressed people to burst the shackles of bondage ? *Moses, mighty in words and in deeds* is commissioned their deliverer. Is a small nation to enter their promised inheritance, *a land flowing with milk and boney* ? The victorious Joshua leads them in. Is the new world to be severed from the old, and an infant nation to rise into independence ? WASHINGTON is born. America, lately a forest from the lakes to the shores of the Atlantic, rises a theatre of bold events ; and Heaven proportions the Actors to the august scene. Hero thro the whole is WASHINGTON ; of a band of worthies the worthiest ; bravest among the brave in war ; and wisest among the wise in peace.

HE was the third son of Mr. Augustine Washington, a planter in Virginia, of respectable talents and reputation, and of large estate. While very young he had the misfortune to lose his father† and eldest brother ; but was still blessed

B

with

* February 22d, 1732, N. S.

† At the age of ten.

with the prudent care of an excellent mother, by whose dissuasion, at the age of *fifteen*, he was prevented entering into the naval service of England, as a midshipman.

His morning sun rose fair and cloudless, presaging the splendors of its noon and the glories of its evening. Endued with abilities such, as his official stations have developed, and with genius such, as immortalizes the productions of his pen, he assiduously improved his youthful time in cultivating them, under the direction of a private instructor. The task of education was early completed ; and at the age, when most youths are under the restraint and instruction of tutors, he commenced a career of public service, which had but short interruptions for nearly fifty years.

GRATEFULLY should we remark the well adapted means, by which he was furnished for his approaching high destinies. From the school of letters Providence called him to the school of arms,* in which his young bosom learned to feel the sacred impulse of love of country, and his hands to practise the necessary art of defending her.

SIGNALIZED even while a boy by his enterprising and public spirit, at the opening of the frontier war in 1754, the Governor of Virginia honored him, as his messenger to remonstrate with the encroaching French. Returning from his mission

* In the nineteenth or twentieth year of his age he was Adjutant, with the rank of Major.

mission unsuccessful, he received a new pledge of public respect and confidence in the appointment to command a regiment. His bravery and address were soon attested at a post upon the Ohio, where, disappointed of succor from New York, he maintained his ground with 400 men against the French commandant DE VILLIER with 800; and finally obtained the honorable compromise, that the hostile parties should leave the field in opposite directions.*

At a later period of the contest, happy might it have been for the British forces in America, if the haughty Braddock, whose only martial talent was courage, and all his "experience, the review of a regiment of guards at Hyde Park," had respected the counsel and cautious policy of this youthful Provincial, then his aid; it might have prevented the fall of the General, the destruction of one half of his army, and the inglorious retreat of the other. The disaster and the disgrace must have been total, had not WASHINGTON, like a protecting angel, hovered upon their panic stricken rear, and secured the retreat of troops, which it was impossible to rally to the charge. But the day however disastrous to the ill-fated Braddock, covered the YOUNG HERO with unfading laurels, and gave a just presage of that intrepid coolness, and of those superior military talents, which have been so gloriously displayed in a more important day.

IN

* See Russell's Modern Europe.

IN the peace, which succeeded, the talents of the illustrious FARMER could not be concealed by the shades of Mount Vernon ; and he was called to serve his country in various civil offices. His native State, by electing him to the first American Congress,* gave testimony that his virtues as a citizen were not less respectable, than his merits as a soldier had been resplendent.

Now let us behold him engaging in the cause of the Continent at that dark day, when were contested its dearest interests and independence ; at that day, when with a boldness, which held all Europe in suspense and astonishment, this *young country* dared to cast the gauntlet to the bravest and most potent kingdom in the world. All was doubt and uncertainty. The timidly prudent foresaw evil and hid themselves. *Many* espoused the cause of the parent country ; *more* held a neutral or wavering position ; *all* trembled at the vast design ; all shuddered at the rising storm gathering with tempestuous blackness. War was called rebellion, and its leaders traitors. In the event of defeat, confiscation of estate and a gibbet were all the tender mercies to be expected by those, who should distinguish themselves in the Colonial Armies or Councils. The varying policy of the English cabinet also mingled temptation with terror ; and princely rewards were offered to elicit leading men to the royal standard.

It

It was at such a time that WASHINGTON disdained a mercenary calculation upon life and interest, and even upon *glory*, to a soldier dearer, than both ; and accepted* a commission from Congress to command an army, which had no experience but of wrongs, and no military disposition, but what consisted in resentment of oppression, and invincible love of liberty. What, tho the war was a conflict between manhood and infancy ; between a well organized government and an unsettled democracy ; between a well appointed army, supported by a navy the mistress of the seas, and a few hasty recruits, which left their families and ploughs, spurred by the enthusiasm of the moment ; *his* confidence lay in heaven and the righteousness of the cause.

TELL ye, who felt it, what joy his unanimous appointment inspired thro the country, and his arrival at Cambridge† diffused among the troops. Then first it was that war on our part received system, and an army of farmers assumed discipline. The rigor of oppression, practised in the Capital of this State, soon began to remit ; and the British General, awed by the hero of Monongahela, provided for his safety by a hasty retreat.

IN the performance of an hour you will not expect the detail of his glory in a memorable eight years' war. Read his eulogy on the immortal pages of Ramsay. In that eventful day, many
did

* June 15th, 1775.

† July 23, 1775.

did the pressure of the occasion bring into the field, who served their country with noble talents and with as pure a zeal, as WASHINGTON; *not one*, however, with purer zeal, nor one with talents so great, so original, so astonishing, as *his*. The scenes of war were diversified beyond an example, on the ensanguined pages of history. His occasions were often new and distressing; but the resources of his mind were always adequate to them. The scales of war, in which were poised the glory of the British crown and the rights and liberties of this new empire, vibrated to the opposite extremes. More than once so low sunk the American balance, that despair hung out her black ensigns all over the Continent. WASHINGTON alone with his little band supported courage. Never depressed by disaster, he sunk only to rise the higher. Behold him retreating thro the Jerseys before a numerous army flushed with success, his own army reduced to a handful of troops, disheartened, destitute, tracked by the blood of their naked feet, kept together only by love of their GENERAL, sinking into despair with their depending country. This was the glorious moment, in which his bold genius turned the tide of war against his victorious enemies, and roused the expiring hopes and energies of his country. Hear the story from the companion of his arms* —“ Dreadful was the night; it was about this time

* Major General Henry Lee.

time of winter*—The storm raged—the Delaware, rolling furiously with floating ice, forbade the approach of man. WASHINGTON, selfcollected, viewed the tremendous scene—his country called; unappalled by surrounding dangers, he passed to the hostile shore: He fought, he conquered. The morning sun cheered the American world. Our country rose on the event; and her dauntless chief, pursuing his blow, completed in the lawns of Princeton, what his vast soul had conceived on the shores of Delaware."

NEEDLESS is it, fellow citizens, to single to you instances of his warlike *policy*, always cautious, yet often unexpectedly bold; nor of his *execution*, always safe, yet often rapid and surprising. Each successive campaign displayed them, until his victory at Yorktown crowned his military character and career, and closed a war as glorious to himself, as the prize, which it won, was inestimable to his country.

At the close of the war, enthroned in the affections of soldiers and of citizens, his praises resounded thro the INDEPENDENT STATES in a universal acclamation.

It is here we have a novel view of heroic greatness. As in war, so more decidedly at the commencement of peace, humanly speaking, he was the arbiter of his country's fate. The country lay at the mercy of the army, and the army had learned

* December 25th, 1776.

† October 19th, 1781.

learned to think that their General could do no wrong. At Rocky hill he stood, as Cæsar at the Rubicon ; but O, how unlike Cæsar in his resolution ! Having conquered foreign enemies in a revolutionary day, he was, as Cromwell, in the heart of the country, with the flower of his troops devoted to his wishes ; nay half inviting him to redress *their wrongs*, and for himself to assume what *title and elevation* he should choose. But he was solicitous only to convert his brave foldiers to peaceful citizens, and to resign the staff of command for the humble plough. As the boastful conqueror of Italy, but *fugitive hero* of Egypt, he found the system of confederation insufficient to protect the republic ; but seems not once to have thought, that a General with a corps of *grenadiers* was the *sagest* body to reform it.

FAR other thoughts, at this crisis, employed his great and good mind. Perceiving jealousies rising between the foldier and citizen, the father of both, he soothed and counselled them. He persuaded the retiring foldier to a gentle and courteous carriage, and the citizen with justice to appreciate, and with honor and generosity to reward the toils and sufferings, which had been the price of his independence. Who can read his circular address to the States and his farewell orders to the army, and not imagine that he has found the charm, which recovered to unison the discordant voices and interests of the nation.

BEFORE

BEFORE we lose sight of the GENERAL, permit me, for a moment to compare him——with whom? The pages of antient and of modern history present not an example of this heroic, unambitious, beneficent greatness. Other heroes have there been, whose names have blazed with glory throughout the world as well as his. But what was Alexander or Cæsar, what was Lewis or Frederick, compared with our WASHINGTON? Terror spread thro the world before their arms, and desolation and slavery followed in their train. Their cause was domination; their success all their glory; a glory, which preserves their names only to couple them with infamy and the execration of mankind. But over the talents and success of WASHINGTON, virtue and religion cast their sacred lustre. His cause was righteous; and his humanity softened as much as possible the rigors and misfortunes inseparable from war. He mourned in the field of victory; he wept over the captive spy, while his firm hand sanctioned the warrant, which consigned him to execution. Ardent and intrepid as Cæsar in the field, in the tent he kneeled a humble suppliant to the God of armies. And what assurance did it once impart to his army to behold their General, when entering an engagement, dropping the reins upon his horse and raising his hands in prayer to the great Arbiter of battle. Such piety, while it tended to engage the divine blessing and to secure the palm of victory, is an *immortal* glory in his character.

MORALITY and religion were a part of HIS system of military discipline, with which he labored to perfect his army, both by his own steady example, and by frequent general orders. Profaneness was abashed at his presence ; and gambling concealed her guilty head, or appeared but to betray the soldier to stripes, and the officer to degradation. Which shall we here most admire, the sound policy of the GENERAL, or the incorruptible integrity of the CHRISTIAN ?

HAVING resigned to Congress the commission, which with reluctant modesty he had accepted, he hurried to his sweet and ever welcome retreat, impeded only by the grateful honors, which thousands crowded to pay, and followed by the united benedictions of a whole great people.

THE human genius commonly suffers a narrow limitation ; and few are the men, who are born to excel in more, than one sphere. But WASHINGTON is a marked exception from this general rule. Like the glorious sun, having dispelled the storm and cloudy horrors of war, he shone in peace with a mild and beneficent radiance. For soon we behold him, again obedient to the voice of his country, presiding in the assembly of *sages*,* and sanctioning with his own great name, the production of their cool counsels, a system of government the admiration of the old world, and the pride and felicity of the new.

IN

* May 1787.

IN organizing the new government, every eye, true, as the magnet to the pole, was attracted to the illustrious Farmer, and designated him the first PRESIDENT of a nation, whose independence and constitutional establishment owed so much to his valor and wisdom. WASHINGTON had conquered his enemies ; here you shall see him conquering *himself*. Warworn, glad to have finished the fatigues and labors of a long contest, and to have escaped the painfulness of an high office, which subjected him to the plotting envy of presumptuous rivals, and to the open and secret malice of causeless enemies, he was reclining in the bosom of retirement and peace. The measure of his glory, the world said, was full. O judge then with what regret he heard the summons of his country to repair to the helm of state, an office untried and most highly responsible. "No event," says he in his first address to the national legislature, "could have filled me with greater anxieties. But the voice of my country I can never hear, but with veneration and love." He sacrificed every personal consideration to patriotism, and with a humility which exalted greatness, having solicited the candor of his country, and most fervently supplicated the favor of heaven, he entered his civil career.*

THE time of peace gives birth to achievements less splendid, than those of war, but not less estimable.

* April 30th, 1789.

able. A fortunate coincidence of circumstances has often laurelled a warrior, who had neither valor nor conduct. But success, in civil administration, is the result of *talents, application, and integrity*. And never did supreme magistrate exhibit these with happier effect, than WASHINGTON in his eight years' Presidency. He was conciliatory, yet firm in the foreign relations of the government; mild and accessible, dignified and just in the domestic. His lifted arm spread terror among the restless savages of the wilderness; but when they came to sue for peace, his paternal tenderness melted them to grateful affection; a safer guarantee to our frontiers, than a parchment of names and promises.

EUROPE has ever been a fitful assemblage of jarring states, in whose quarrels this continent, as colonies, has always been involved. In the present unexampled conflict between thrones and libertinism, between government and anarchy, both parties employed all their address to ally this *youthful but robust* country. But WASHINGTON, just to both, partial to neither, by his proclamation of neutrality, held our country aloof from the storm; which, blessed by his pacific counsels and those of his TRULY WORTHY SUCCESSOR, only *bears* the distant thunder, which rends the total fabric of Europe.

At length the period arrived, long sighed for
by

by himself, long with affectionate solicitude delayed by his country, in which he resigned his official life. The occasion (who has yet forgotten, who can ever forget it) filled his bosom with all the sensibilities of a dying anxious father. His CHILDREN, (for heaven wrote him *childless*, that millions might find in him a father) from the one extremity of the Union to the other, listened to hear his parting counsel. He gave it. O precious legacy of love and wisdom! Magistrates, it is your polar star; by this shall you safely conduct the political bark. Citizens, it is the girdle of your union; "a band to inclose, conciliate, and strengthen the whole of your wonderful and almost boundless communities. Read, preserve the sacred deposit; and lest posterity should forget the truth of its maxims, engrave them on his tomb, that they may read them, when they weep before it."

HAVING once more resigned† the honors of office, which he had held "unsought unfulled," he retired to his favorite Mount to wait the great change of nature.

BUT his country had one call more upon her protector, and his unrivalled character one grade yet to ascend. France, intoxicated with ambition and success, assumed a bolder tone and menaced our independence with her cannon, which she had long in vain assailed by her intrigue.

WASHINGTON,

WASHINGTON, his head now silvered with age, but his mind still found and his health vigorous, heard the menace with indignation. And tho for more, than fifteen years, in war and peace, he had filled the first office in the gift of his country, and might have filled it till his death, he accepted* a *lieutenancy* to repel her dangers. With what confidence did we cast our eyes upon the old warrior, again in armor, when our dangers thickened from abroad? Just was that confidence; for soon the insulting demand of tribute at the peril of war was shifted to a cringing suit for negociation and peace.

THUS lived this HERO and STATESMAN. Shall I tell you how he died? It was worthy such a life. Death, like the sleep of evening after a well spent day, was welcome; and "with his own unshaken hand he closed his eyes." The mighty Cæsar, having filled the world with the glory and the misery of his victories, fell by the daggers of the noblest men in Rome. WASHINGTON, when the prayers of his country could avail no longer, leaves millions to bless his memory and to water his grave with their tears.†

His character results from his life. Sullied it is not by any folly of youth, or by any vice or misfortune of age. Heaven was pleased to adorn his soul with a splendid variety of talents and virtues, and to place him in the age and country entirely

* 1798.

† Died December 14th, 1799.

entirely adapted to their exhibition. Both hemispheres concur in calling him of great men the greatest, and of good men the best. In the union of goodness and greatness he presented a rare view of human nature. For commonly those preeminent talents, which commanded the *admiration* of mankind, have been attended by vices, which forbade their *esteem*. The foil, which bears the majestic oak, sends up the poisonous ivy to entwine and shade it. But the VIRTUES of WASHINGTON were as sublime as his ABILITIES.

FEW mount to any glorious height without becoming giddy. But *HE* was never more *moderate*, than when the nation was in his power ; never more *modest*, than when the world rung the loudest with his praises. His *courage* was of an original temper ; he fled not even from the *reproach of cowardice*. But so soon as a just occasion was given, he exposed his body to the shock of battle.

His noble person at once announced the majesty of his mind ; and his countenance, while it commanded reverence, invited love and confidence. His loftiness of spirit was so attempered with sweetness of demeanor, that his inferiors, (he had no equals) were never hurt by his superiority. Tho his greatness was mild, it never descended even to innocent levity. It has been remarked by an officer, who was near his person, that

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that, for the seven first years of the war, a smile was not once seen upon his countenance.

Most seem anxious to describe in his character what is *great* alone; but it is incomplete while are withholden those *amiable* traits, which adorned his retired and unofficial life. *Love of country* was his paramount passion; but never chilled the softer affections, which flowed in the kindest endearments to his consort, and gentlest manners to his domestics. An affecting tenderness, doubly endeared by majestic dignity, beamed from his countenance on all around him. He seemed to be the FATHER of the multitudes, which thronged his steps. And never will be forgotten the affectionate respect, which on all occasions he rendered to the fairer sex. While he lived, this partiality was faithfully repaid; and now he is dead, his country has no honors to bestow upon his memory so fair, as the tears, which suffuse their beauty.

A SKETCH of the life and some traits of the character of this great man have now been attempted. The just and equal character shall rise hereafter from the historic pencil of a Ramsay, a Minot, or a Humphreys, like a noble fabric, combining the useful, the beautiful, and the magnificent in perfect proportion and harmony. But I glory in believing that the foundation on which the original has been reared, was religion. This ethereal spirit pervaded his mind, animated his
virtues

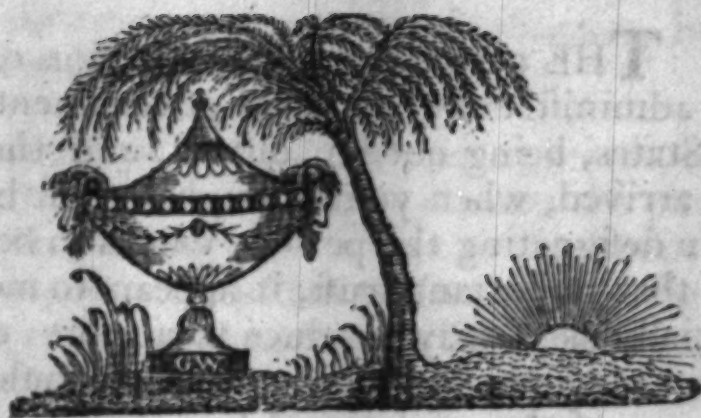
virtues, invigorated his talents, and, by inducing the divine blessing, secured success. It is his best eulogium, attested by his public acts and private life, that *HE WAS A CHRISTIAN*.

IN reviewing the important period, filled by the life of WASHINGTON, in recurring to the great scenes, the interesting incidents, the original situations, in which successively he has been placed, all which comprise the birth, the infancy, and manhood of this vast empire, unworthy shall we be to have had such a blessing, if we do not this day mingle the tears of pious gratitude for the *bestowment* with those of national grief for the *loss* of this great man. It is our duty to remember him as a *PROVIDENTIAL* man, given, furnished, and supported for the glory and happiness of this new world. *Criminal* is our admiration, if it rise not above the creature. In this bright assemblage of virtues and talents, we have seen an emblem of their divine Original; but an emblem *INFINITELY HUMBLE*. It is as the shooting meteor of night, compared with the perennial glories of the sun. Let our just admiration of the *man* lead us profoundly to adore the *CREATOR*; and the affectionate honors, which are this day universally paid to his memory, excite a universal and most fervent gratitude to God, who gave him to our country.

THO our first thanks are due to God, we must gratefully remember WASHINGTON, the first
among

among human benefactors. *Gratefully remember him!* God grant there be no idolatry in the honors, which his countrymen so ardently pay him. The superb mausoleum will soon rise in the Metropolis, to cover his precious dust; the breathing marble and animated brass shall vie to show his majestic mein and person. The poet, the biographer, and historian shall bring their tributary honors. The matchless pencil of Trumbull shall give to the admiring world imitative scenes of his glorious life. But dearer than all, his monument is already erected in every bosom, and his services recorded upon the fleshly table of every heart. Father to son, in family history, shall transmit his life and virtues, as subjects of grateful memory and of humble imitation. "Despair, my child," shall the parent say, "to be as *great*, but contend earnestly to be as *good*, as WASHINGTON." Thus "Columbia's Guardian" shall still live on earth in his bright *example*, and shower blessings on his country, while he "sleeps in dust." Future Generals shall hold him their model, and add to their glory by imitating his humanity to enemies and his affectionate tenderness to soldiers, the correctness of his morals and the piety of his manners. Future Presidents, as his compatriot the ILLUSTRIOUS ADAMS, who fills the chair with rival dignity and wisdom, shall be richer blessings to their country thro his example. Such are the honors, which still await
our

our beloved WASHINGTON BELOW ; let us prepare my fellow mortals, to behold with exultation the honors, which crown him *ABOVE*.



ADDRESS
OF

George Washington,

ON DECLINING BEING CONSIDERED A CANDIDATE
FOR THE *PRESIDENCY* OF THE *UNITED STATES*.

TO THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES.

FRIENDS AND FELLOW CITIZENS,

THE period for a new election of a citizen, to administer the executive government of the United States, being not far distant, and the time actually arrived, when your thoughts must be employed in designating the person, who is to be clothed with that important trust, it appears to me proper, especially as it may conduce to a more distinct expression of the public voice, that I should now apprise you of the resolution I have formed, to decline being considered among the number of those, out of whom a choice is to be made.

I beg you, at the same time, to do me the justice to be assured, that this resolution has not been taken without a strict regard to all the considerations appertaining to the relation, which binds a dutiful citizen to his country; and that, in withdrawing the tender of service, which silence in my situation might imply, I am influenced by no diminution of zeal for your future interest; no deficiency of grateful respect for your past kindness: But am supported by a full conviction that the step is compatible with both.

The

The acceptance of, and continuance hitherto in the office to which your suffrages have twice called me, have been a uniform sacrifice of inclination to the opinion of duty, and to a deference for what appeared to be your desire. I constantly hoped, that it would have been much earlier in my power, consistently with motives, which I was not at liberty to disregard, to return to that retirement, from which I had been reluctantly drawn. The strength of my inclination to do this, previous to the last election, had even led to the preparation of an address to declare it to you ; but mature reflection on the then perplexed and critical posture of our affairs with foreign nations, and the unanimous advice of persons entitled to my confidence, impelled me to abandon the idea.

I rejoice, that the state of your concerns, external as well as internal, no longer renders the pursuit of inclination incompatible with the sentiment of duty, or propriety ; and am persuaded, whatever partiality may be retained for my services, that, in the present circumstances of our country, you will not disapprove my determination to retire.

The impressions, with which I first undertook the arduous trust, were explained on the proper occasion. In the discharge of this trust, I will only say, that I have, with good intentions, contributed towards the organization and administration of the government, the best exertions, of which a very fallible judgment was capable. Not unconscious, in the outset, of the inferiority of my qualifications, experience, in my own eyes, perhaps still more in the eyes of others, has strengthened the motives to diffidence of myself ; and every day the increasing weight of years admonishes me more and more, that the shade of retirement is as necessary to me

as it will be welcome. Satisfied that if any circumstances have given peculiar value to my services, they were temporary, I have the consolation to believe, that, while choice and prudence invite me to quit the political scene, patriotism does not forbid it.

In looking forward to the moment, which is intended to terminate the career of my public life, my feelings do not permit me to suspend the deep acknowledgment of that debt of gratitude, which I owe to my beloved country, for the many honors it has conferred upon me ; still more for the steadfast confidence with which it has supported me ; and for the opportunities I have thence enjoyed of manifesting my inviolable attachment, by services faithful and persevering, though in usefulness unequal to my zeal. If benefits have resulted to our country from these services, let it always be remembered to our praise, and as an instructive example in our annals, that under circumstances in which the passions, agitated in every direction, were liable to mislead, amidst appearances sometimes dubious,—vicissitudes of fortune, often discouraging in situations, in which not unfrequently want of success has countenanced the spirit of criticism—the constancy of your support was the essential prop of the efforts, and a guarantee of the plans by which they were effected. Profoundly penetrated with this idea, I shall carry it with me to my grave, as a strong incitement to unceasing vows, that Heaven may continue to you the choicest tokens of its beneficence—that your union and brotherly affection may be perpetual—that the free Constitution, which is the work of your hands, may be sacredly maintained—that its administration in every department may be stamped with wisdom and virtue—that, in fine, the happiness of the people of these States, under the auspices of liberty, may be made complete,
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by so careful a preservation and so prudent a use of this blessing, as will acquire to them the glory of recommending it to the applause, affection, and adoption of every nation which is yet a stranger to it.

Here perhaps, I ought to stop. But solicitude for your welfare, which cannot end but with my life, and the apprehension of danger, natural to that solicitude, urge me, on an occasion like the present, to offer to your solemn contemplation, and to recommend to your frequent review, some sentiments, which are the result of much reflection, of no inconsiderable observation, and which appear to me all-important to the permanency of your felicity as a people. These will be offered to you with the more freedom, as you can only feel in them the disinterested warnings of a parting friend, who can possibly have no personal motive to bias his counsel. Nor can I forget, as an encouragement to it, your indulgent reception of my sentiments on a former and not dissimilar occasion.

Interwoven as is the love of liberty with every ligament of your hearts, no recommendation of mine is necessary to fortify or confirm the attachment.

The unity of Government which constitutes you one people, is also now dear to you. It is justly so; for it is a main pillar in the edifice of your real Independence, the support of your tranquillity at home, your peace abroad; of your safety; of your prosperity; of that very liberty which you so highly prize. But, as it is easy to foresee, that from different causes and from different quarters, much pains will be taken, many artifices employed, to weaken in your minds the conviction of this truth; as this is the point in your political fortress, against which the batteries of internal and external enemies will

will be most constantly and actively, (though often covertly and insidiously) directed, it is of infinite moment that you should properly estimate the immense value of your National Union, to your collective and individual happiness ; that you should cherish a cordial, habitual, and immovable attachment to it ; accustoming yourselves to think and speak of it as of the palladium of your political safety and prosperity, watching for its preservation with jealous anxiety ; discountenancing whatever may suggest even a suspicion that it can in any event be abandoned ; and indignantly frowning upon the first dawning of every attempt to alienate any portion of our country from the rest, or to enfeeble the sacred ties, which now link together the various parts.

For this, you have every inducement of sympathy and interest. Citizens, by birth or choice, of a common country, that country has a right to concentrate your affections. The name of AMERICAN, which belongs to you, in your national capacity, must always exalt the just pride of patriotism, more than any appellation derived from local discriminations. With slight shades of difference, you have the same religion, manners, habits and political principles. You have, in a common cause, fought and triumphed together ; the independence and liberty you possess are the work of joint councils, and joint efforts, of common dangers, sufferings, and successes.

But these considerations, however powerfully they address themselves to your sensibility, are greatly outweighed by those which apply more immediately to your interest. Here every portion of our country finds the most commanding motives for carefully guarding and preserving the union of the whole.

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The North, in an unrestrained intercourse with the South, protected by the equal laws of a common government, finds in the productions of the latter, great additional resources of maritime and commercial enterprise, and precious materials of manufacturing industry. The South, in the same intercourse, benefiting by the agency of the North, sees its agriculture grow, and its commerce expand. Turning partly into its own channels the seamen of the North, it finds its particular navigation invigorated—and while it contributes, in different ways, to nourish and increase the general mass of the national navigation, it looks forward to the protection of a maritime strength, to which itself is unequally adapted. The East in a like intercourse with the West, already finds, and in the progressive improvement of interior communications, by land and water,—will more and more find a valuable vent for the commodities which it brings from abroad, or manufactures at home. The West derives from the East supplies requisite to its growth and comfort—and, what is perhaps of still greater consequence, it must of necessity owe the *secure* enjoyment of indispensable *outlets* for its own productions to the weighty influence, and the future maritime strength of the Atlantic side of the Union, directed by an indissoluble community of interest as *one nation*. Any other tenure by which the West can hold this essential advantage, whether derived from its own separate strength, or from an apostate and unnatural connection with any foreign power, must be intrinsically precarious.

While, then, every part of our country thus feels an immediate and particular interest in Union, all the parts combined cannot fail to find in the united mass of means and efforts, greater strength, greater resource, proportionably greater security, from external danger, a less frequent interruption of their
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peace

peace by foreign nations ; and, what is of inestimable value ! they must derive from Union an exemption from those broils and wars between themselves, which so frequently afflict neighboring countries, not tied together by the same government ; which their own rivalships alone would be sufficient to produce, but which opposite foreign alliances, attachments and intrigues would stimulate and embitter. Hence, likewise they will avoid the necessity of those overgrown military establishments, which under any form of government, are inauspicious to liberty, and which are to be regarded as particularly hostile to Republican Liberty : In this sense it is, that your Union ought to be considered as a main prop of your liberty, and that the love of the one ought to endear to you the preservation of the other.

These considerations speak a persuasive language to every reflecting and virtuous mind, and exhibit the continuance of the UNION as a primary object of patriotic desire. Is there a doubt, whether a common government can embrace so large a sphere ?—Let experience solve it. To listen to mere speculation in such a case were criminal. We are authorized to hope that a proper organization, of the whole, with the auxiliary agency, of governments for the respective subdivisions, will afford a happy issue to the experiment. It is well worth a fair and full experiment. With such powerful and obvious motives to Union, affecting all parts of our country, while experiment shall not have demonstrated, its impracticability, there will always be reason to distrust the patriotism of those, who in any quarter may endeavor to weaken its bands.

In contemplating the causes which may disturb our Union, it occurs as matter of serious concern, that any ground should be furnished for characterising parties, by Geographical discriminations—

Northern

Northern and Southern—Atlantic and Western ; whence designing men may endeavor to excite a belief, that there is a real difference of local interests and views. One of the expedients of party to acquire influence, within particular districts, is to misrepresent the opinions and aims of other districts. You cannot shield yourselves too much against the jealousies and heart burnings which spring from these misrepresentations : they tend to render alien to each other those ought to be bound together affection. —The inhabitants of our western country have lately had a useful lesson on this head : They have seen, in the negociation by the Executive, and in the unanimous ratification by the Senate, of the Treaty with Spain, and in the universal satisfaction at that event, throughout the United States, a decisive proof how unfounded were the suspicions propagated among them, of a policy in the general government and in the Atlantic states unfriendly to their interests in regard to the Mississippi ; they have been witnesses to the formation of two treaties, that with Great Britain and that with Spain, which secure to them every thing they could desire, in respect to our foreign relations, towards confirming their prosperity. Will it not be their wisdom to rely for the preservation of these advantages on the UNION by which they were procured ? Will they not henceforth be deaf to those advisers, if such they are, who would sever them from their brethren, and connect them with aliens ?

To the efficacy and permanency of your Union, a government for the whole is indispensable. No alliances, however strict, between the parts can be an adequate substitute ; they will inevitably experience the infractions and interruptions which all alliances in all times have experienced—Sensible of this momentous truth, you have improved upon your first essay, by the adoption of a constitution of

a government better calculated than your former for an intimate Union, and for the efficacious management of your common concerns. This government, the offspring of your own choice, uninfluenced and unawed, adopted upon full investigation and mature deliberation, completely free in its principles, in the distribution of its powers, uniting security with energy, and containing within itself a provision for its own amendment, has a just claim to your confidence and your support. Respect for its authority, compliance with its laws, acquiescence in its measures, are duties enjoined by the fundamental maxims of true liberty. The basis of our political systems is the right of the people to make and to alter their constitutions of government. But, the constitution which at any time exists, till changed by an explicit and authentic act of the whole people, is sacred obligatory upon all. The very idea of the power and the right of the people to establish government, pre-supposes the duty of every individual to obey the established government.

All obstructions to the execution of the Laws, all combinations and associations, under whatever plausible character, with the real design to direct, control, counteract or awe the regular deliberation and action of the constituted authorities, are destructive of this fundamental principle, and of fatal tendency. They serve to organize faction, to give it an artificial and extraordinary force—to put in the place of the delegated will of the nation, the will of a party, often a small but artful and enterprising minority of the community; and, according to the alternate triumphs of different parties, to make the public administration the mirror of the ill concerted and incongruous projects of faction, rather than the organ of consistent and wholesome plans digested by common councils and modified by mutual interests.

However

However combinations or associations of the above description, may now and then answer popular ends, they are likely in the course of time and things, to become potent engines, by which cunning, ambitious and unprincipled men, will be enabled to subvert the power of the people, and to usurp for themselves the reins of government ; destroying afterwards the very engines which have lifted them to unjust dominion.

Towards the preservation of your government, and the permanency of your present happy state, it is requisite, not only that you steadily discountenance irregular opposition to its acknowledged authority, but also that you resist with care, the spirit of innovation upon its principles, however specious the pretexts. One method of assault may be to effect in the forms of the constitution, alterations which will impair the energy of the system, and thus to undermine what cannot be directly overthrown. In all the changes to which you may be invited, remember that time and habit are at least as necessary to fix the true character of government, as of other human institutions that experience is the surest standard, by which to test the real tendency of the existing constitution of a country—that facility in changes upon the credit of mere hypothesis and opinion, exposes to perpetual change, from the endless variety of hypothesis and opinion ; and remember, especially, that for the efficient management of your common interest, in a country so extensive as ours, a government of as much vigor as is consistent with the perfect security of liberty, is indispensable. Liberty itself will find in such a government, with powers properly distributed and adjusted, its surest guardian. It is, indeed, little else than a name, where the government is too feeble to withstand the enterprises of faction, to confine each member of the society within

within the limits prescribed by the laws, and to maintain all in the secure and tranquil enjoyment of the rights of person and property.

I have already intimated to you, the danger of parties in the state, with particular reference to the founding of them on geographical discriminations. Let me now take a more comprehensive view and warn you in the most solemn manner against the baneful effects of the spirit of party, generally.

This spirit, unfortunately, is inseparable from our nature, having its root in the strongest passions of the human mind. It exists under different shapes in all governments—more or less stifled, controlled, or repressed ; but in those of the popular form, it is seen in its greatest rankness and is truly their worst enemy.

The alternate domination of one faction over another, sharpened by the spirit of revenge, natural to party dissention, which in different ages and countries has perpetrated the most horrid enormities, is itself a frightful despotism—But this leads at length to a more formal and permanent despotism.—The disorders and miseries, which result, gradually incline the minds of men to seek security, and repose in the absolute power of an individual ; and sooner or later the chief of some prevailing faction more able or more fortunate than his competitors, turns this disposition to the purposes of his own elevation, on the ruins of Public Liberty.

Without looking forward to an extremity of this kind (which nevertheless ought not to be entirely out of sight) the common and continual mischiefs of the spirit of party are sufficient to make it the interest and duty of a wise people to discourage and restrain it.

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It serves always to distract the Public Councils and enfeeble the Public Administration. It agitates the community with ill founded jealousies and false alarms ; kindles the animosity of one part against another, foment occasionally riot and insurrection. It opens the door to foreign influence and corruption, which find a facilitated access to the government itself through the channels of party passions. Thus the policy and will of one country are subjected to the policy and will of another.

There is an opinion that parties in free countries are useful checks upon the administration of the government, and serve to keep alive the spirit of Liberty. This within certain limits is probably true, and in governments of a monarchical cast, patriotism may look with indulgence, if not with favour upon the spirit of party. But in those of the popular character, in governments purely elective, it is a spirit not to be encouraged. From their natural tendency it is certain there will always be enough of that spirit for every salutary purpose. And there being constant danger of excess, the effort ought to be by force of Public opinion, to mitigate and allay it. A fire not to be quenched ; it demands uniform vigilance to prevent its bursting into a flame, lest instead of warming, it should consume.

It is important, likewise, that the habits of thinking, in a free country, should inspire caution in those entrusted with its administration, to confine themselves within their respective constitutional spheres, avoiding, in the exercise of the powers of one department, to encroach upon another. The spirit of encroachment tends to consolidate the powers of all the departments in one, and thus to create, whatever the form of government, a real despotism. A just estimate of that love of power, and proneness to abuse it, which predominates in the human heart is sufficient to satisfy us of the truth of this position

tion. The necessity of reciprocal checks in the exercise of the political power ; by dividing and distributing it into different depositories, and constituting each the guardian of the public weal against invasions by the others, has been evinced by experiments ancient and modern ; some of them in our country and under our own eyes. To preserve them must be as necessary as to institute them. If, in the opinion of the people, the distribution or modification of the constitutional powers be in any particular wrong, let it be corrected by an amendment in the way, which the constitution designates—But let there be no change by usurpation ; for though this, in one instance, may be the instrument of good, it is the customary weapon by which free governments are destroyed—The precedent must always greatly overbalance in permanent evil any partial or transient benefit which the use can at any time yield.

Of all the dispositions and habits, which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism, who would labor to subvert these great pillars of human happiness, these firmest props of the duties of men and citizens. The mere politician, equally with the pious man, ought to respect and to cherish them. A volume could not trace all their connexions with public and private felicity. Let it be simply asked, Where is the security for property, for reputation, for life, if a sense of religious obligation *desert* the oaths which are the instruments of investigation in courts of justice ? And let us with caution indulge the supposition, that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education, on minds of peculiar structure ; reason and experience both forbid us to expect, that national morality can prevail, in exclusion of religious principle. It

It is substantially true, that virtue or morality is a necessary spring of popular government. The rule, indeed, extends, with more or less force, to every species of free government. Who, that is a sincere friend to it, can look with indifference upon attempts to shake the foundation of the fabric?

Promote, then, as an object of primary importance, institutions for the general diffusion of knowledge. In proportion as the structure of a government gives force to public opinion, it is essential that public opinion should be enlightened.

As a very important source of strength and security, cherish public credit. One method of preserving it is, to use it as sparingly as possible; avoiding occasions of expense by cultivating peace; but remembering also, that timely disbursements to prepare for dangers, frequently prevent much greater disbursements to repel it: Avoiding likewise the accumulation of debt, not only by shunning occasions of expence, but by vigorous exertions in time of peace to discharge the debts which unavoidable wars may have occasioned, not ungenerously throwing upon posterity the burthen which we ourselves ought to bear. The execution of these maxims belongs to your representatives, but it is necessary that public opinion should co-operate. To facilitate to them the performance of their duty, it is essential that you should practically bear in mind that towards the payment of debts there must be revenue;—that to have revenue there must be taxes—and none can be devised which are not more or less inconvenient and unpleasant—that the intrinsic embarrassment inseparable from the selection of the proper objects (which is always a choice of difficulties)—ought to be a decisive motive for a candid construction of the conduct of the government in making it, and for a spirit of acquiescence in the measures

measures for obtaining revenue which the public exigencies may at any time dictate.

Observe good faith and justice towards all nations ; cultivate peace and harmony with all—Religion and Morality enjoin this conduct ; and can it be, that good policy does not equally enjoin it ? It will be worthy of a free, enlightened, and (at no distant period) a great nation, to give to mankind the magnanimous and too novel example of a people always guided by an exalted justice and benevolence. Who can doubt that in the course of time and things, the fruits of such a plan would richly repay any temporary advantages which might be lost by a steady adherence to it ? Can it be, that Providence has not connected the permanent felicity of a Nation with Virtue ? The experiment, at least, is recommended by every sentiment which ennobles human nature.—Alas ! is it rendered impossible by its vices ?

In the execution of such a plan, nothing is more essential than that permanent, inveterate antipathies against particular Nations, and passionate attachments for others should be excluded ; and that in the place of them, just and amicable feelings towards all should be cultivated. The Nation, which indulges towards another an habitual hatred, or an habitual fondness, is in some degree a slave.—It is a slave to its animosity or to its affection, either of which is sufficient to lead it astray from its duty and its interest. Antipathy in one nation against another disposes each more readily to offer insult and injury, to lay hold of slight causes of umbrage, and to be haughty and intractable, when accidental or trifling occasions of dispute occur.

Hence frequent collisions, obstinate, envenomed and bloody contests. The Nation, prompted by ill
will

will and resentment, sometimes impels to war the government, contrary to the best calculations of policy. The government sometimes participates in the national propensity, and adopts through passion what reason would reject ; at other times, it makes the animosity of the nation subservient to projects of hostility instigated by pride, ambition, and other sinister and pernicious motives. The peace often, sometimes perhaps the liberty, of Nations has been the victim.

So likewise, a passionate attachment of one Nation for another produces a variety of evils. Sympathy for the favorite Nation, facilitating the illusion of an imaginary common interest, in cases where no real common interest exists, and infusing into one the enmities of the other, betrays the former into a participation in the quarrels and wars of the latter, without adequate inducement or justification. It leads also to concessions to the favorite nation of privileges denied to others, which is apt doubly to injure the Nation making the concessions ; by unnecessarily parting with what ought to have been retained ; and by exciting jealousy, ill will, and a disposition to retaliate, in the parties from whom equal privileges are withheld :—And it gives to ambitious, corrupted or deluded citizens (who devote themselves to the favorite Nation) facility to betray, or sacrifice the interests of their own country, without odium, sometimes even with popularity ; gilding with the appearances of a virtuous sense of obligation a commendable deference for public opinion, or a laudable zeal for public good, the base of foolish compliances of ambition, corruption, or infatuation.

As avenues to foreign influence in innumerable ways, such attachments are particularly alarming to the truly enlightened and independent patriot.
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How many opportunities do they afford to tamper with domestic factions, to practice the arts of seduction to mislead public opinion, to influence or awe the public councils ; such an attachment of a small or weak, towards a great and powerful nation, dooms the former to be the satellite of the latter.

Against the insidious wiles of foreign influence (I conjure you to believe me, fellow citizens) the jealousy of a free people ought to be *constantly* awake ; since history and experience prove that foreign influence is one of the most baneful foes of Republican Government. But that jealousy to be useful must be impartial ; else it becomes the instrument of the very influence to be avoided, instead of a defense against it. Excessive partiality for one foreign nation, and excessive dislike of another, cause those whom they actuate to see danger only on one side, and serve to veil and even second the arts of influence on the other. Real patriots, who may resist the intrigues of the favorite, are liable to become suspected and odious ; while its tools and dupes usurp the applause and confidence of the people, to surrender their interests.

The great rule of conduct for us in regard to foreign nations, is in extending our commercial relations, to have with them as little *political* connection as possible. So far as we have already formed engagements, let them be fulfilled with perfect good faith.—Here let us stop.

Europe has a set of primary interests, which to us have none, or a very remote relation. Hence she must be engaged in frequent controversies, the causes of which are essentially foreign to our concerns. Hence therefore, it must be unwise in us to implicate ourselves, by artificial ties, in the ordinary vicissitudes of her politics, or the ordinary combinations

combinations and collisions of her friendships, or enmities.

Our detached and distant situation, invites and enables us to pursue a different course. If we remain one people, under an efficient government, the period is not far off, when we may defy material injury from external annoyance ; when we may take such an attitude as will cause the neutrality, we may at any time resolve upon, to be scrupulously respected ; when belligerent nations, under the impossibility of making acquisitions upon us, will not lightly hazard the giving us provocation ; when we may choose peace or war, as our interest, guided by justice, shall counsel.

Why forego the advantages of so peculiar a situation ? Why quit our own, to stand upon foreign ground ? Why, by interweaving our destiny with that of any part of Europe, entangle our peace and prosperity in the toils of European ambition, rivalry, interest, humour or caprice ?

It is our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliances, with any portion of the foreign world ; so far, I mean, as we are now at liberty to do it ; for let me not, be understood as capable of patronising infidelity to existing engagements. I hold the maxim no less applicable to public than to private affairs, that honesty is always the best policy. I repeat it, therefore, let those engagements be observed in their genuine sense. But in my opinion, it is unnecessary, and would be unwise to extend them.

Taking care always to keep ourselves, by suitable establishments, on a respectable defensive posture, we may safely trust to temporary alliances for extraordinary emergencies.

Harmony, liberal intercourse with all nations, are recommended

recommended by policy, humanity and interest.— But even our commercial policy, should hold an equal and impartial hand ; neither seeking nor granting exclusive favors or preferences ; consulting the natural course of things ; diffusing and diversifying, by gentle means, the streams of commerce, but forcing nothing ; establishing, with the powers so disposed, in order to give trade a stable course, to define the rights of our merchants, and to enable the government to support them, conventional rules of intercourse, the best that present circumstances and mutual opinion will permit, but temporary, and liable to be from time to time abandoned or varied, as experience and circumstances shall dictate ; constantly keeping in view, that it is folly in one nation to look for disinterested favors from another ; that it must pay, with a portion of its independence, for whatever it may accept under that character ; that, by such acceptance, it may place itself in the condition of having given equivalents for nominal favors, and yet of being reproached with ingratitude for not giving more. There can be no greater error than to expect or calculate upon real favors from nation to nation. It is an illusion which experience must cure, which a just pride ought to discard.

In offering to you, my countrymen, these counsels of an old and affectionate friend, I dare not hope they will make the strong and lasting impression I could wish ; that they will control the usual current of the passions, or prevent our nation from running the course which has hitherto marked the destiny of nations : But if I may even flatter myself, that they may be productive of some partial benefit, some occasional good ; that they may now and then recur to moderate the fury of party spirit, to warn against the mischiefs of foreign intrigue, to guard against the impostures of pretended patriotism ; this hope will be a full recompense for the solicitude for your welfare, by which they have been dictated.

How

How far, in the discharge of my official duties, I have been guided by the principles which have been delineated, the public records, and other evidences of my conduct, must witness to you and to the world. To myself, the assurance of my own conscience is, that I have at least believed myself to be guided by them.

In relation to the still subsisting war in Europe, my proclamation of the 22d of April, 1795, is the index to my plan. Sanctioned by your approving voice, and by that of your Representatives in both Houses of Congress, the spirit of that measure has continually governed me; uninfluenced by any attempts to deter or divert me from it.

After deliberate examination, with the aid of the best lights I could obtain, I was well satisfied that our country, under all the circumstances of the case, had a right to take, and was bound in duty and interest to take, a neutral position. Having taken it, I determined, as far as should depend upon me, to maintain it with moderation, perseverance and firmness.

The considerations which respect the right to hold this conduct, it is not necessary on this occasion to detail. I will only observe, that, according to my understanding of the matter, that right, so far from being denied by any of the belligerent powers, has been virtually admitted by all.

The duty of holding a neutral conduct may be inferred, without any thing more, from the obligation which justice and humanity impose on every nation, in cases, in which it is free to act, to maintain inviolate the relations of peace and amity towards other nations.

The inducements of interest for observing that
conduct

conduct will be best referred to your own reflections and experience. With me, a predominant motive has been to endeavor to gain time to our country to settle and mature its yet recent institutions, and to progress, without interruption, to that degree of strength and consistency, which is necessary to give it, humanly speaking, the command of its own fortunes.

Though in reviewing the incidents of my administration, I am unconscious of intentional error, I am nevertheless too sensible of my defects, not to think it probable that I may have committed many errors. Whatever they may be, I fervently beseech the Almighty to avert or mitigate the evils to which they may tend. I shall also carry with me the hope, that my country will never cease to view them with indulgence ; and that after forty five years of my life dedicated to its service, with an upright zeal, the faults of incompetent abilities will be consigned to oblivion, as myself must soon be to the mansions of rest.

Relying on its kindness in this as in other things, and actuated by that fervent love towards it, which is so natural to a man who views in it the native soil of himself and his progenitors for several generations ; I anticipate, with pleasing expectation, that retreat, in which I promise myself to realize, without alloy, the sweet enjoyment of partaking, in the midst of my fellow citizens, the benign influence of good laws under a free government—the ever favorite object of my heart, and the happy reward, as I trust, of our mutual cares, labors and dangers.

G. WASHINGTON.

United States, 17th September, 1796.

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